

Poverty Status, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability among the Elderly

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SUMMARY:

A primary goal of long term care delivery systems is to assist aged individuals with functional needs. Therefore, the need and type of long term care will be influenced by the functional disability of the population served. Functional disability in terms of independent living, self-care, and work limitations is influenced by social characteristics. This module introduces students to the relationships between age, race/ethnicity, gender, poverty, and disability. It also provides students with an opportunity to use census data to gather information about a target population.

LEARNING GOALS:

Skill:

- Learn about survey methods and the availability of census data
- Learn how to construct and interpret bivariate tables
- Understand the importance of using data to support conclusions
- Develop the ability to relate findings to the implications they may have on long term care delivery systems.

Substance:

- Examine the influence of economic condition on disability and self care.
- Examine the influence of intrinsic characteristics such as ethnicity, age and gender on poverty, disability and self care.
- Examine the relationships between poverty, independent living limitations and work limitations, and describe the effect this could have on the lives of impoverished elders.

CONTEXT FOR US

This module is designed for use in a undergraduate college classroom. Basic computer skills are necessary, however students of all levels can succeed with instructor guidance. This activity could be used either as a self-directed student activity or as a supplement to classroom lecture material.

ACTIVITY:

This activity is divided into 3 portions. First, I provide the research questions that guide data analysis. Second, I list the steps to complete the activity. Third, there are a series of questions you will need to answer and turn in for credit. You will be able to answer all of the assigned questions by following the steps as I have listed them. Do not be frightened by the number of steps; the activity is actually relatively simple. I have listed each step separately to make things easier for students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Through completing this activity you will find answers to the following research questions:

1. Does race influence poverty status among the elderly?
2. Does gender influence poverty status among the elderly?
3. Does race influence disability in terms of independent living limitations?
4. Does gender influence disability in terms of independent living limitations?
5. Does poverty influence disability in terms of independent living limitations?
6. Do independent living limitations influence self care?
7. Do gender and poverty work together to influence self care?
8. Does gender influence the relationship between independent living limitations and work limitations?

Steps to Complete Activity:

To complete this activity you will need to use data from the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2010 provided on WebCHIP 4.0. Use the following url or link to access WebCHIP

<http://ssdan.net/datacounts/webchip>

- For this project we will be using a subset of the 2010 ACS data. To access this dataset from the WebCHIP, click on the drop-down menu under "Collections". Find **acs2010** then under "Dataset" find **EldrDisab**. Click "Compute Marignals" to see the variables (and their marignals) included in

the dataset. The data marginals are similar to what are sometimes called frequencies. They tell you what percentage of the sample responded to each category of each question.

Please answer assignment questions 1, 2 & 3.

- Next, begin to create data tables to answer the next questions. Select "RaceEth" to be the Row/independent variable. Select "PovLevel" to be the column/dependent variable. Click on "Percent Across".
- A table should appear. The cells represent the percentage of each racial category that fits into each economic category. For example, 7.3% of white elders live in poverty. On the bottom, the total row tells you the percentage of the total sample that live in poverty. For example, 9.4% of all elders live in poverty.

Please answer assignment questions 4, 5 & 6.

You will need to create a new table to address the influence of gender on poverty among the elderly. This time, select Gender as your row variable (Gender will be the independent variable) and select "Pov" as your column variable (Poverty will be the dependent variable), finally select "Percent Across" from the drop down list. A table should appear. Cells represent the percentage of each gender that lives in each economic category.

Please answer assignment question 7.

- This time, select RaceLEth (race) for the row or independent variable, and select IndLvLmtt (Independent Living Limitations) for the Column or dependent variable; select "Percent Across". The "yes" column indicates the percent of persons that have limitations to their Independent living for each race category.

Please answer assignment questions 8 & 9.

- Select "Gender" for the row or independent variable, and select "IndLvLmt" (independent living limitations) for the Column or dependent variable; select "Percent Across".

Please answer assignment question 10.

- Make a percent across table with "PovLevel" (poverty) as the independent variable and "IndLvLmt" as the dependent variable.

Please answer assignment question 11.

- Make a percent across table with "IndLVLmt" as the independent variable and "SelfCare" as the dependent variable. The "yes" column indicates the percentage of person that need assistance with personal cares, or cannot care for themselves without help. The "yes" row indicates the percentage of persons with independent living limitations.

Please answer assignment question 12.

- Under "choose variables" set up another table with poverty the independent variable and SelfCare the dependent variable. Now we want to look at how gender and poverty work together to influence the need for personal assistance. Select "Gender" as a control variable. This will provide separate tables for men and women. Click "Percent Across". The "yes" column indicates the percentage of persons who need assistance with personal care in each economic class. One table displays men, one displays women.

Please answer assignment question 13.

Assignment questions to answer and turn into instructor for credit:

1. This data set contains census information for persons aged 65 and above. What percentage of persons over age 65 are female?
2. What percentage of persons over age 65 live in poverty? Live in comfortable economic conditions (comf)?
3. What percentage of persons over age 65 have limitations (indlvlmt)?
4. What racial group has the highest percentage of elders living in poverty?
5. What racial group has the highest percentage of elders living in comfort (Comf)?
6. Using the Total row, what is the most common economic class among the elderly?
7. Who is more likely to live in poverty, men or women?
8. Do most elderly persons have independent living limitations?
9. Which racial category has the least amount of reported independent living limitations?
10. Do men have more independent living limitations than women?
11. In general, do poorer persons have a higher or lower percentage of independent living limitations?
12. What percentage of persons without independent living limitations need assistance with personal care?
13. Which group has highest percentage of persons needing personal care assistance: comfortable (Comf) men or comfortable (Comf) women?
14. . Think about what you have discovered using census data and provide one implication of these findings in regards to long term care delivery. In other words, how do you think the relationship between age, race/ethnicity, gender, poverty, disability and self care influences how long term care is delivered?